

COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL PAMPHLET.

1185] LONDON, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1817. [1186

NOTIFICATION.

A sealed Parcel, containing the Petition of Mr. COBBETT to the Prince Regent in behalf of the oppressed Colonies in Spanish America, and also containing a Note from Mr. Cobbett to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, was delivered, on the 19th instant, at Lord Sidmouth's Office, with the following Letter from the Publisher:—

"MY LORD—The accompanying Packet, containing a Petition from Mr. Cobbett to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent and a Note to your Lordship, was received by a Friend of Mr. Cobbett's, who would have requested permission to deliver the same into your Lordship's hand, pursuant to his instructions from Mr. Cobbett; but, having at the same time received other instructions of a later date, which render the personal delivery unnecessary, he commissions me to leave the Packet at your Office, and also to signify to your Lordship that Mr. Cobbett, since forwarding it, has seen statements in English Papers, which have induced him to alter the Plan stated in his Note to your Lordship, and to direct the Petition to be published with the least possible delay."

Mr. Cobbett, when he transmitted the Petition, intended that it should, or should not be published, according to certain contingencies, which are stated in his Note to the Secretary of State. His Letter to the Gentleman to whom he transmitted the Petition includes a Copy of that Note, and is here published at the head of the Petition. Mr. Cobbett, on receiving English Papers a few days afterwards, was induced to send other instructions, enjoining immediate publication, in consequence, he says, of what he saw in the COURIER, which convinced him, "that the Borough-mongers had resolved not to suffer the Government to take a part in the Spanish American contest."

To ———, Esq.

North Hampstead, Long Island,
17th Oct. 1817.

MY DEAR SIR,

I enclose you two sealed parcels, the one, which is superscribed, "*The Petition*", is the copy of a Petition to the Prince Regent; the other, which is addressed to the Home Secretary of State, contains the original of that Petition, and also a Note to the Secretary of State, in the following words: "Mr. Cobbett presents his compliments to His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department, and encloses to him a Petition to be presented to his Royal Highness, the Prince Regent. The gentleman, who will be the bearer of the present Note and of the Petition, will have in his possession, at the same time, a copy of the Petition sealed up, with instructions to break, or not to break, the seal, according to the following contingencies: that is to say, if, at the end of ten days from the day of the delivery of this Note and the Petition, the bearer (who will leave his name with the Secretary of State) receive from the Secretary of State a notification in writing, that the Petition has been duly presented to the Regent, and that, in the Secretary of State's opinion, the public good requires, that ON ACCOUNT OF THE IMPORTANT MATTER of the Pe-

P. P.

“*tion, the Petition should not be*
 “*published*; then the bearer’s instruc-
 “tions are, not to break the seal.
 “But, if the bearer shall not have
 “received such notification at the end
 “of the said ten days; then his in-
 “structions are to break the seal, and
 “to cause the Petition to be pub-
 “lished. The bearer is further in-
 “structed not, on any account, to
 “deliver the Petition to, or act upon
 “any notification received from, any
 “Under Secretary, or any person
 “other than the Secretary of State;
 “and, in case of official obstacles,
 “of any sort, to the execution of Mr.
 “Cobbett’s instructions, he is in-
 “structed to make no more applica-
 “tions, but to cause the Petition to
 “be published at once.”

Now, I beg you to be so kind as to receive these as your instructions upon this occasion, and I am very sure I need not add my hope, that they will be properly executed. I know well, that the subject of the Petition is of vast importance to the country; and, notwithstanding the government is in such unworthy hands, I love my country too well, and hate the example of the Boroughmongers too much, to suffer me to do any thing to injure the former in order to gratify any angry feeling against the latter, however just that feeling may be. It is possible that some *diplomatic discussions* may be on foot, or some *warlike measures* in forwardness, which might be injuriously affected by the promulgation of the Petition; and it is my duty towards the king and towards my country to guard against any such effect being produced by me.

But, on the other hand, I will suffer no insult from these unworthy men.

If you do not receive the notification in *unequivocal terms*, open the parcel and publish the Petition at once, and, at the head of it, publish the whole of this letter. The probability is, that you will receive no intimation at all upon the subject; for Despotism is always as blind as it is insolent. If, by any chance, a gleam of sense, or of decency, should break in upon the gloom of Whitehall, and if this should produce the proposed notification, you will not, on any account, break the seal of the parcel containing the Petition; nor will you cause this letter to be published, nor even make its contents known to any body.

To you, who know so well the value of words, I need only say, that, as to the proposed *notification* from the Home Secretary, though I do not care about the *precise words*, I care greatly about the *meaning*; and, that, if the *full meaning*, expressed by me in my Note, be not contained in any notification, that he may, by chance, send you, I request you *not* to deem it satisfactory; but, to cause the Petition to be published, in the same manner as you would, if you had received no notification at all.

I further request, that, in case of publication, you will place *before* this letter, a statement of your own, explaining what you have done, and all that has passed, relative to the business; but, let me beseech you, *not*, on any account, to suffer your natural modesty and complaisance to lead you into any correspondence, or communication, of any kind, with any Under-Secretary, or other Underling.

I am always your faithful friend,

And most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

*To His Royal Highness the PRINCE,
Regent of the United Kingdom of
Great Britain and Ireland.*

The Petition of WILLIAM COB-
BERT of Botley in the County
of Southampton, now re-
siding at North Hampstead,
in the State of New York, this
17th day of October, 1817,

Most humbly Sheweth,

That, next after the present situa-
tion of England herself, the object the
most interesting to every well-inform-
ed and patriotic Englishman must, as
your Petitioner humbly presumes to
believe, be the present situation of the
Spanish Colonies in America, in whose
immense and fertile regions there are
preparing, and, indeed, there are now
in progress, such changes as will, in all
human probability, produce a new
distribution of wealth and of power
amongst the most considerable of the
nations of the world; and, as will, at
the very least, materially affect many
of those nations, not only in a Com-
mercial, but also in a Naval and Mili-
tary point of view. Of all those na-
tions no one is, as it appears to your
humble Petitioner, nearly so deeply
interested as England in this grand Re-
volution, which, if your Royal High-
ness's Councillors be wise, prompt, and
faithful to their King and his People,
may greatly tend to restore her to
prosperity, may secure to her an un-
disputed maritime predominance for
ages not to be numbered, and may, at

the same time, and from the use of the
very same means, crown her with the
unfading glory of having given freedom
to twenty millions of people, who now
groan out their lives under the double-
thonged scourge of Civil and Religious
tyranny.

Such being the opinion of your Pe-
titioner, it is impossible for him to re-
frain from soliciting most humbly,
though most earnestly, the attention of
your Royal Highness to this import-
ant matter. And, he begs leave here
to be permitted to represent to your
Royal Highness, that, while taking
this step, he forgets not the injuries at
this time unjustly inflicted on his fel-
low subjects in general, and on him-
self in particular; but, that, bearing
these in mind, as he trusts he shall, to
the last moment of his life, he also
bears in mind those sacred obligations
of law and of nature, which bind him
to the land of his birth, and which bid
him upon this occasion, as upon all
other occasions, to make every exer-
tion, within the compass of his humble
means, to promote the welfare and ad-
vance the honour of England.

To the mind of your Royal Highness
the bare fact of a Revolution being in
existence and agitating the breasts of the
whole of the population of a country,
which reaches from the 18th degree of
North Latitude to the 50th degree of
South Latitude; a country which thus
extends four thousand miles in length,
which, in breadth, at some points, ex-

tends three thousand miles, and which is unbroken except by the comparatively trifling possessions of the Portuguese and the Dutch; a country which borders, at one extremity, on the part of the United States, at once the most fertile and the most important as to all probable future military and naval operations; a country, which has numerous ports on the side of the Pacific, as well as on that of the Atlantic, ocean; a country, which, to all the articles of European produce adds many articles that are refused by nature even to the most favoured part of the United States; a country, which, while it is cheered by a continual summer on the surface of the earth, has mines beneath inexhaustible in silver and in gold; a country which abounds in, or is capable of producing, almost all the commodities, greatly useful, as imports, to England, and which, at the same time, offers to England the surest, the most extensive, and the best of all possible markets; a country, which, if independent, nature would forbid to become, in any respect, the rival of England, and which from necessity must seek her friendship, and rely, in a great measure, on her power: to the mind of your Royal Highness the bare fact of a Revolution being in actual existence in such a country; to the mind of every one who feels for the interest and honour of England, this bare fact, as your Petitioner humbly presumes to believe,

must suggest the strongest desire to know the true state of that Revolution and to see clearly developed the probable consequences of its ultimate success.

Deep is the sorrow of your Petitioner when he reflects on his incapacity to perform this task in a manner worthy of the magnitude and importance of the subject; but, urged thereunto by a sense of imperious duty towards your Royal Highness and his Country, no conviction, however perfect, of his inability can be sufficient to restrain him from making the attempt.

Minutely to describe the state of the Revolution in Spanish America; to lay before your Royal Highness in detail the number of men in arms in the several Provinces and Vice Royalities; to state the precise situation of the hostile armies and armaments; to say what are the exact means, which, in the several warlike scenes, the parties possess, or may speedily expect: these would demand a mass of information not only greater than is possessed by your Petitioner, but greater than can, at this time, possibly be possessed by any one man. But, the information which your Petitioner has acquired, not from mere rumour or from published accounts, but from a personal communication with men of high character, coming directly from the spot, enables him confidently to state to your Royal Highness, that, in the

Vice Royalty of Mexico, which is the most Northern part of the Spanish Dominions on the Main, and which borders on the United States, the people are wholly disaffected to the government; that they have a Junta, or Assembly of Representatives, in the Province of Validolid; that they have leaders of great enterprize and talent, and that *arms* only are wanted to decide, at once, the struggle in their favour; that the Vice Roy, indeed, raises troops, but that even these are disaffected towards him; that, on the Atlantic side, the only considerable Sea-port of this Vice Royalty, La Vera Cruz, is, as yet, in the hands of the Spanish Government, but that, to drive the present possessors from that port, and to afford every necessary assistance to the oppressed people, one single English frigate, with twenty thousand stand of arms, sent to the Gulph of Mexico, would be sufficient; that this Vice Royalty, which proposes to form itself into a distinct independent state, has a population of from seven to eight millions, nearly equalling the population of the United States of America, on which it borders on one side, and with regard to the resources and power of which United States, the establishment of the Independence of Mexico, must, as your Petitioner will hereafter humbly endeavour to show, have a most important effect.

That, with regard to the Second

grand Division of these immense regions, which Division includes New Granada and Venezuela, and which extends from the Isthmus of Darien to the mouth of the Oronoca (along more than seven hundred miles of Sea-coast the most important in every point of view), containing a population of from three to four millions, a Declaration of Indêpendence, and a new form of Government have, long since, been proclaimed; that a war, extensive and sanguinary, has, for years, been going on; that the Patriots have Commanders regularly appointed and commissioned; that they have a Representative Assembly, Officers of State, a National Flag, and, in short, that they exercise the powers of sovereignty over a large portion of this extensive, fertile, rich and important territory. Here, as in the case of Mexico, arms only and a trifling maritime force are wanted to put an end to the contest, and, as your Petitioner humbly hopes that he shall be able to show, to open to England the fairest prospect of immense advantages.

That, in Peru, which forms the Third Division, and which is bounded to the North by the last-mentioned Territory, to the East by the Portuguese Possessions, to the South by the Territory of Chili, and to the West by the Pacific Ocean, and which has a population of from two to three millions, the spirit of Independence is

as active as in the aforementioned Territories, and that here also a mere trifle in the way of maritime force and of arms would decide the contest, even, perhaps, without further struggle.

That, in the Southern Division, including the Territories of Buenos Ayres and of Chili, and containing a population of from three to four millions, the contest is nearly at an end. The Patriots have established a new Government, and, with the exception of a trifling portion of Territory on the borders of the Pacific Ocean, on which Spain is endeavouring to keep up the struggle, the whole of this Division is under the actual controul of the Patriot government.

But, though your Petitioner places, in relation to the state of the Revolution, great reliance on the particular information which he has, from most respectable and authentic sources received, he places much greater reliance upon the natural and inevitable tendency of the existence, throughout the afore-mentioned countries, of a general spirit of revolt against oppression and insult exercised by imbecility, and which spirit of revolt together with which oppression, insult and imbecility are notorious to all the world. The history of nations, as your Petitioner humbly ventures to believe, furnishes no instance of the re-subjugation of a people, once in arms for their rights and perfectly enlightened as to the nature of those rights, unless

such people were overwhelmed by an irresistible combination of foreign Powers, a circumstance that cannot happen to the Spanish Independents, unless through the consent, or the connivance, of England, acting, as in such case she must, not only in violation of the dictates of justice and humanity, but, as your Petitioner humbly hopes he shall be able to show, in direct opposition to her own most important and most permanent interests.

In order to obtain an insight as to the probable consequences of the ultimate success of the Revolution of Spanish America, especially as those consequences will affect, permanently as well as for the present, the prosperity and power of England, and that he might be able the better to discharge his duty to your Royal Highness and his country, your Petitioner has carefully attended to the nature of the products throughout the territories which are the subject of his petition. And, as to this matter, he begs leave humbly to beseech your Royal Highness to bear in mind that Mexico produces all those articles of commerce, which are produced in the United States, such as cotton, tobacco, ship-timber, and many others, and, besides these, cochineal, indigo, dye-woods, and mahogany, while it abounds in those mines of silver and of gold, of which the United States have none. The city of Mexico, si-

tuated nearly about the centre of this Vice Royalty, and which City contains a hundred and eighty thousand inhabitants, is blessed with a climate that knows no winter; a never-fading verdure clothes the fields; two crops of any kind of European grain are, with facility, made, in the same year, to succeed each other on the same plot of ground, and even two crops of maise, or Indian corn, while one crop of this latter grain is the utmost that can, even with difficulty, be raised in the Northern part of the United States. In the Division of New Granada and Venezuela, which approaches more towards the South, all the products of Mexico abound. Here, as to the Mines, silver and gold receive the addition of platina metal. Tobacco is here produced long acknowledged to be the finest in the world. The vine and the olive have been forbidden by Despotism to produce wine and oil in this their favourite climate, lest these countries should, in this respect, injure Old Spain. At Chili, where the people have been permitted to make wine for their own use only, a proof has been afforded of the eminence to which almost every part of these territories would, if free and independent, speedily arrive, to the great injury, no doubt, of France and Spain and some other of the nations of Europe, but to the incalculable benefit of England. In the Division of Buenos Ayres and Chili; in that of Peru; in

every part of these Territories, are produced all that the United States produce, with a small portion of the labour required in the latter. Hydes and Tallow, from droves roaming at pleasure, unfed and unsheltered, are even now an object of considerable traffick, and, under independent governments, would naturally become such to an immense extent. Lumber and all the articles in wood, together with flour, rice, and all the articles of food, occasionally necessary to England or to her West India Colonies, and which articles are now chiefly supplied by the United States, would, at a much cheaper rate, all be supplied from Mexico and the other countries bordering on the West India Seas, while the resources arising therefrom to these new nations could not possibly, at any period of time, be employed, like the resources of the United States, in the formation of a marine threatening to rival, sooner or later, the Navy of England.

But, amongst the articles, in which Mexico, and more especially New Granada and Venezuela would supplant the United States, there is one, which your Petitioner humbly presumes to point out as worthy of the particular notice of your Royal Highness. The articles of rice, flour and tobacco are, each of them, of great importance, but that of cotton far surpasses any description within the humble powers of your Petitioner to

give. The annual amount of this article of raw-material, imported into England from the United States, great as that amount is, bears no proportion in point of consequence to the circumstances of its being the material of one of the greatest English manufactures, giving employment to a multitude of hands, causing an immense capital to be productively employed, and the interruption of a sufficient supply of which raw material must of necessity be attended with injuries too obvious to be detailed and too great not to be, if possible, provided against. In the Territories which are the subject of this **Petition**, and especially in those which border on the Gulph of Mexico and on the West India Sea, cotton is not only naturally of a quality greatly superior to that of the United States, but it is produced at a small portion of the expence demanded by the cultivation of that of the last-mentioned country. So that, if the territories of Spanish America were freed from the monopoly, the restrictions, and all the selfish and oppressive shackles imposed by Spain; if industry and enterprize were left to take their natural course, those countries would furnish the English manufactures with the most essential article of raw-material at a price greatly reduced, and the close friendship which must necessarily exist between England and those territories would prevent the supply from being interrupted by any of the clashing of interest or any of the casualties of war.

If your Royal Highness's Ministers, too busily engaged in the promoting of Holy Alliances abroad and in sacrific-

ing the freedom of the people to the interest of an usurping Borough Faction at home, have over-looked these obvious commercial consequences of the success of the Revolution in Spanish America, and have also over-looked those still more important consequences of a military and naval character, of which your Petitioner will by and by beg to be permitted to speak, the Rulers of the United States, have, as he will now humbly proceed to show, over-looked neither the one nor the other, but seem to have had all those consequences clearly in their view, and to have done all that lay in their power to prevent them accordingly.

Your Petitioner will not so far presume the existence of perfidy in your Royal Highness's Envoys, or Ministers, as to suppose your Royal Highness not to have been informed, that the Envoys from the Patriot Governments have been refused to be received, in that capacity, by the Government of the United States; but he does presume, that perfidy, or, at least, criminal negligence, must have existed somewhere, because, otherwise, an Act, which was passed by the Congress on the third day of March last, would, with all possible speed, have been laid before your Royal Highness, and in which case your Petitioner is sure that the said Act would have been, by your Royal Highness's order, communicated to the two Houses of Parliament. This being the firm conviction of your Petitioner, he deems it his duty to recite here the words of this Act, and to subjoin to the recital such matter as appears to him necessary to exhibit a

clear view of all the bearings and intentions of this singular and most important document.

“ An Act more effectually to *pre-*
“ *serve the neutral relations* of the
“ United States.

“ Section 1. Be it enacted by the
“ Senate and House of Representa-
“ tives of the United States of Ame-
“ rica, in Congress assembled, That
“ if any person shall, within the limits
“ of the United States, fit out and
“ arm, or attempt to fit out and arm,
“ or procure to be fitted out and
“ armed, or shall knowingly be con-
“ cerned in the furnishing, fitting
“ out or arming of any ship or vessel,
“ with intent that such ship shall be
“ employed in the service of any fo-
“ reign prince or state, or of *any co-*
“ *lony, district, or people*, to cruise or
“ commit hostilities, or to aid or co-
“ operate in any warlike measure
“ whatever against the subjects, citi-
“ zens, or property of any prince or
“ state, or of any *colony, district, or*
“ *people*, with whom the United
“ States are *at peace*, every such per-
“ son so offending shall, upon con-
“ viction, be adjudged guilty of a
“ high misdemeanor, and shall be
“ punished and imprisoned at the
“ discretion of the court in which the
“ conviction shall be had, so as the
“ fine to be imposed shall in no case
“ be more than *ten thousand dollars*,
“ and the term of imprisonment shall
“ not exceed *ten years*; and every
“ such ship or vessel, with her tackle,
“ apparel and furniture, together
“ with all materials, arms, ammuni-
“ tion and stores, which may have
“ been procured for the building and
“ equipment thereof, *shall be forfeited*,
“ one half to the use of any person

“ who shall *give information*, and the
“ other half to the use of the United
“ States.

“ Section 2. And be it further
“ enacted, That the owners of all
“ armed ships, sailing out of the ports
“ of the United States, and owned
“ wholly or in part by citizens there-
“ of, shall *enter into bond* to the
“ United States, with sufficient sure-
“ ties, prior to clearing out the same,
“ in double the amount of the value
“ of the vessel and cargo on board,
“ including her armament, that the
“ said ship or vessel shall not be em-
“ ployed by such owners, in cruising
“ or committing hostilities, or in aid-
“ ing or *co-operating* in any warlike
“ measure against the subjects, citi-
“ zens, or property of any prince or
“ state, or of any colony, district, or
“ people, with whom the United
“ States are *at peace*.

“ Section 3. And be it further
“ enacted, That the collectors of the
“ customs be, and *they* are hereby
“ respectively authorized and re-
“ quired to *detain* any vessel *mani-*
“ *festedly* built for warlike purposes,
“ and about to depart from the United
“ States, of which *the cargo* shall prin-
“ cipally *consist of arms and muni-*
“ *tions of war*, when the number of
“ men shipped on board, or *other cir-*
“ *cumstances*, shall render *it probable*
“ that such vessel is intended to be
“ employed by the owner or owners
“ to cruise or commit hostilities upon
“ the subjects, citizens, or property
“ of any prince or state, or of any
“ colony, district, or people, with
“ whom the United States are at
“ peace, until the decision of the Pre-
“ sident be had thereupon, or until
“ the owner enters into bond, and

"sureties to the United States prior
 "to clearing out the same, in double
 "the amount of the value of the ves-
 "sel and cargo on board, including
 "her armament, that the said ship or
 "vessel shall not be employed by the
 "owner or owners, in cruising or
 "committing hostilities, or in aiding
 "or co-operating in any warlike mea-
 "sure against the subjects, citizens,
 "or property of any prince or state,
 "or of any colony, district, or peo-
 "ple, with whom the United States
 "are at peace.

"Section 4. And be it further
 "enacted, That if any person shall,
 "within the territory or jurisdiction
 "of the United States, *increase* or
 "*augment*, or procure to be increased
 "or augmented, or shall be *knowing-*
 "*ly concerned* in increasing or aug-
 "menting the force of any ship of
 "war, cruiser, or other armed vessel,
 "which at the time of her arrival
 "within the United States, was a
 "ship of war, cruiser, or other armed
 "vessel, in the service of a foreign
 "prince, or state, or of any *colony*,
 "*district*, or *people*, or belonging to
 "the subjects or citizens of any such
 "prince, state, colony, district or
 "people; the same being *at war* with
 "any *foreign prince* or *state*, with
 "whom the United States are at
 "peace, by adding to the number or
 "size of the guns of such vessels pre-
 "pared for use, or by the addition
 "thereto of any equipment, solely
 "applicable to war. every such per-
 "son so offending shall, upon convic-
 "tion, be adjudged guilty of a mis-
 "demeanor, and shall be fined and im-
 "prisoned, at the discretion of the
 "court, in which the conviction shall
 "be had, so as that such fines shall

"not exceed one thousand dollars,
 "nor the term of imprisonment be
 "more than one year.

"Section 5. And be it further
 "enacted, That this Act shall con-
 "tinue in force for the term of two
 "years.

"H. Clay,
 "Speaker of the House of
 "Representatives.

"John Gaillard,
 "President of the Senate,
 "pro tempore.

"Approved,

"May 5, 1817. "James Madison."

With regard to the *Title* of this
 Act, your Petitioner begs leave
 humbly to represent to your Royal
 Highness, that it is a perfect novelty,
 in the history of nations, for any
 Government to pass laws to punish
 its citizens or subjects for violating
 the public laws of neutrality; that
 the law of nations provides the punish-
 ment which, upon this score, nations
 have deemed to be amply sufficient;
 that, in virtue of this law, every citi-
 zen, or subject, of a neutral State is,
 if he trade to a belligerent State in
 articles contraband of war and such
 as are enumerated in this Act, liable
 to have those articles seized and con-
 demned by the belligerent with whose
 enemy he so trades; that this general
 law of nations has rendered any inter-
 ference in such cases, on the part of
 neutral governments, wholly unneces-
 sary; that if individual citizens or
 subjects, belonging to a neutral State,
 supply one of the belligerent Powers
 with arms, or other munitions of war,
 the other belligerent has no ground of
 complaint against the neutral state,
 seeing that such offended belligerent

has, by the law of nations, the right, lodged in its own hands, of punishing such individuals. That, the matter has been, thus, wisely settled by the law of nations; for, if neutral States were to acknowledge, as a duty, the passing of laws to punish their citizens or subjects for violations of the laws of neutrality, neutral States would, by such acknowledgement, give to any and to every belligerent a right to demand of them the passing of such laws, and, thus, would one nation have a right to dictate to another nation not only punishments, but the measure of punishments, to be inflicted on that other nation's citizens or subjects, and this, as your Royal Highness need not be reminded, is a species of degradation, to which no really independent nation has ever submitted.

It appears, therefore, evident to your Petitioner, and he ventures humbly to express his conviction, that it will appear evident to your Royal Highness and to the whole English People (for whose benefit, as your Royal Highness has publicly and truly declared, your Royal Father wears his crown), that the above-re-cited Act of the American Congress was not called for by any neutral duty known to the law of nations, and that it could not, in any wise, possibly be necessary to the preservation of the neutral relations of the United States. Besides, it will at once occur to your Royal Highness and to the People of the whole Kingdom to ask, how it happens, that, in order to preserve its neutral relations, an anxiety, on the part of the American Government, so extreme as to produce this signal work of supererogation, has now, for

the first time, made its appearance to the world? The Government of the United States has had to preserve its neutrality during many years of war amongst the European States, and, which is exactly in point, during a long and sanguinary struggle between France and her important colony of St. Domingo; and yet, as your Petitioner begs leave to state, the Congress has never before passed an Act to punish its citizens for trading in articles contraband of war; and, of course, it has now, for the first time, discovered, that such Acts are necessary to the preservation of its neutral relations, which discovery appears, too, to be the more extraordinary as its effects manifestly tend to prevent a people, groaning under the worst of Despotisms, from obtaining any share of that freedom and that happiness, to have obtained which by an open war against the Mother Country is the boast of the People of these United States.

Moreover, with regard to the *Principle* of this law of the American Congress, your Petitioner begs leave humbly to observe to your Royal Highness, that, it not only imposes a new, and hitherto un-heard of, duty, and a most weighty responsibility, on the Governments which shall adopt it as a precedent; but that cases may frequently arise, in which, to act upon this principle, would be, in substance, though not in form, to take a part in the war, and, of course, to commit hostility on one or the other of the belligerents; for, if one of the belligerent nations have, within herself, or, at her command, an ample supply of arms and of all the munitions of war, and if the other must necessa-

rily depend upon neutrals for such supply, your Petitioner humbly conceives that there can be no doubt in the mind of your Royal Highness, that a neutral nation, who should pass an act, commanding her people to carry arms, or munitions of war, to neither of the belligerents, would, under the outward shew of impartiality, be, in fact, guilty of obvious partiality in favour of the well-armed and well-provided belligerent, would, in reality, join that belligerent in hostility against the un-armed and un-provided belligerent, and would thus afford full justification to the latter to consider, and act towards, such neutral nation as an enemy. So that the Principle, upon which this law of the American Congress professes to proceed, instead of tending to preserve the neutral relations of States, must, as appears to your Petitioner, naturally tend to make such States, sooner or later, parties in every contest between other nations, and, instead of repressing and confining, must tend to render boundless the extent, the duration and the miseries of war.

Feeling, as your Petitioner does, profound respect for the American Congress, as the real representatives of a people truly free, as legislators whose seats are not obtained by the base means of bribery and corruption, as men whose votes are not the price of wealth wrung from the hard hands of a toiling and starving nation; and feeling, too, great gratitude towards the whole American people for that protection, which the effects of their wisdom, virtue and valour now afford him against the power of the Borough-faction, who so daringly oppress and insult his native country: with these

feelings in his breast, it is with unaffected grief, that your Petitioner, in proceeding most humbly to solicit the attention of your Royal Highness to the provisions of this Act of the Congress, finds himself compelled to express his confident belief, that your Royal Highness will, in the three first Sections of the Act, clearly perceive all that impartiality in words and all that partiality in tendency and in object, so manifest in the above-supposed case; and of which supposed case of pretended neutrality and of real hostility, this Act of Congress is, it appears to your Petitioner, nothing short of a full, practical illustration. But, while, in the three first Sections, the Act assumes, and closely wears, the garb of impartiality, in the fourth Section, which is the most material, this garb becomes loosened, and renders visible the real character of the Act. For, while this Section forbids the augmentation of the force of any vessel *belonging* to any foreign *prince, state, colony, district, or people*, if such prince, state, colony, district, or people be *at war* with any foreign *prince or state*, with whom the United States are *at peace*; while this Section forbids this, it does *not* forbid the augmentation of the force of any vessel *belonging* to any prince, state, colony, district or people, if neither of these be at war with a *prince or state*; so that, as Old Spain is not at war with a *prince or state*, but with *colonies, districts, or people*, the vessels belonging to Old Spain may enter, receive augmentation of force, and sail out again to make war upon the *colonies*, which colonies are neither *princes* nor *states*; but the colonies of Spanish America, being at war with a *prince or state*, can enjoy

none of those advantages which are here exclusively given to their inexorable oppressor.

That a Government, founded on the principles of the natural and unalienable rights of man, and arising out of a revolt of colonists against the mother country, because that mother country, by her conduct, gave them good reason to apprehend oppression at some future day; that a government, chosen by a people, who annually listen to orations from the Pulpit, in praise of Revolution, who, by all kinds of demonstrations of joy, celebrate their successful revolt, and who hold in the highest reverence the persons and memory of all the men, who distinguished themselves in the securing of that success; that a Government, which boasts, and justly boasts, of exhibiting to the world a practical proof, that the greatest degree of political, civil and religious liberty is perfectly consistent with the greatest degree of public order, tranquillity, and obedience to the laws, and also with the greatest degree of national security in time of war; that a government, which holds, in the broadest sense, the right of men to cast off, or transfer, their allegiance; which tenders the right of citizenship, and promises protection as citizens, to all men of all nations upon the sole condition of a five years' residence and an oath abjuring all allegiance to their native sovereigns and country; that a government thus implanted, thus growing up, thus extending its sheltering branches and dropping its nourishing fruits; that such a government, should have voluntarily passed an Act, punishing with severity, surpassing, in fact, the penalty of immediate death,

such of its own citizens as may aid or abet the colonists of Spain, compared to whose real and actual oppression all that the people of the United States could possibly have apprehended from England was as the finger of the dwarf weighed against the loins of the giant; that such a Government should have passed such an Act, must, if men suppress their indignation, necessarily excite throughout the world the utmost degree of sorrow and surprize.

But, if your Royal Highness shall be graciously pleased to advert to what your Petitioner has humbly stated in the foregoing part of this his Petition, relative to the superiority in point of products, and relative to all the numerous commercial advantages, which would enable the Spanish colonies, if become free and independent governments, speedily to rival, to surpass and supplant the United States, and more especially if your Royal Highness shall, in your great condescension, be pleased to suffer your Petitioner humbly to draw your attention to the prodigious effect which the liberation of the Spanish Colonies must necessarily have on the United States in a naval and military point of view, your Petitioner is fully persuaded, that all ground for surprize at the passing of the above recited Act of Congress will wholly disappear; and that, though it may be difficult, upon moral principles, to find a justification for that extraordinary measure, the Congress will clearly appear to have displayed, upon this occasion, a degree of political foresight and wisdom equal to that of its legislative energy, it being impossible not to perceive, that the real object of this measure is, to prevent the independence of Spanish America from giving a great

check to the increase of the population, pecuniary resources, commerce, naval power and territorial dominion of the United States.

While this enlightened body of legislators so clearly saw, that the Independence of Spanish America generally would naturally and necessarily divert the current of European emigration from the United States to the more genial climes of the South, whither the taste for novelty, the love of ease, and the desire of gain, are all pressing invited, and where they are all promised indulgence in the most ample degree; while the Congress clearly saw, that the independence of those countries could not fail to take from the United States the chief part of their export of tobacco, rice, flour and cotton, these staples of their commerce, the Congress also saw, that a proportionate diminution would, from the same cause, arise in the amount of imported articles, which are the objects of exchange for the products exported, and the Custom Duties on which imported articles form the main part of the pecuniary means of the United States wherewith to maintain and increase their Navy and to defray the interest of their Public Debt; while the Congress must have seen clearly, and with great anxiety, these inevitable consequences of the independence of Spanish America generally, that body could not have seen but with real alarm the prospect of the establishment of a free and independent Government in Mexico, a country bordering on the United States for many hundreds of miles, surpassing the United States in white population, having a capital city with nearly two hundred thousand inhabitants, abounding in mines of the

precious metals, abounding in ship-timber and in sea-ports in both oceans, having, from the very nature of things, the absolute command of the mouth of the Mississippi, the great and only outlet to all the most fertile and flourishing of the United States, and, above all, a country, which every interest and every feeling must necessarily bind in fast and permanent alliance with England.

But, while your Royal Highness and His Majesty's faithful People will clearly perceive, that it was, and is, perfectly natural for the Congress to feel anxiety and alarm at the appearance of these impending consequences of the independence of Spanish America; that sentiments of patriotism and considerations of duty might make them dread, and endeavour to prevent, a Revolution, which, if successful, would check the growth of the resources and power of their own country; which would raise up and establish rivals in liberty as well as in power, on the same continent; which, while it put a stop to the increase of their own marine, would create other American marines, sufficient to cope with theirs in point of force, and naturally in constant rivalry with it; which would make England the absolute arbitress amongst all the transatlantic nations, and which, while it necessarily tended to enrich the manufacturers, merchants and ship-owners of England, as necessarily tended to give to the English Flag an undisputed predominance on the seas for ages beyond the reach of human fore-sight or calculation: while your Royal Highness and His Majesty's faithful People will perceive, that, with these prospects and

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considerations in their minds, it was perfectly natural and patriotic in the Congress to endeavour to prevent the success of the Revolution in the Spanish colonies. your Petitioner does not hesitate to express his firm belief, that your Royal Highness and the People will also perceive, that the inactivity, the torpor, the cold-hearted indifference, shown, on this occasion, by the Ministers of your Royal Highness, are altogether as un-natural and as un-patriotic, and discover a want of even the most ordinary feeling equally for the interests of the country and for the honour of His Majesty's Crown.

It being always less painful to impute mischief to folly than to wickedness, gladly would your humble Petitioner ascribe this inactivity, this torpor, this cold-hearted indifference, so manifestly injurious to his country and his king, and apparently so unaccountable, wholly to that want of talent, that incapacity for the managing of great affairs, that grovelling propensity of mind, for which the Ministers, imposed on your Royal Highness by the Borough-faction and not the objects of your own Royal choice, are so strongly characterized and are so notorious; but, the same sense of duty towards your Royal Highness and towards his beloved country, which has urged your Petitioner to submit, with feelings of great diffidence and humility, to your Royal Highness the foregoing representation, also urges him to declare it to be his conviction, though, as an Englishman, the declaration covers him with shame, that this inactivity, this torpor, this cold-hearted indiffer-

ence, this shameful neglect of the interest, the happiness, and the glory of England, are chiefly, if not solely, to be ascribed to a reluctance on the part of that Borough-faction, by whom your Royal Highness's Ministers are removable at pleasure, to suffer the taking of any part in behalf of the Spanish colonies, lest the principles of Holy Alliances and of pretended Legitimacy should thereby receive their condemnation and their over-throw, and lest, upon the ruins of those detestable principles and upon those of the Borough-usurpation, the rights and liberties of the People of England and the just powers and prerogatives of their lawful Sovereign should be built on sure and lasting foundations; for, while your Petitioner is too well aware of the magnanimity which prevails in the breast of your Royal Highness and not less in that of the nation, to suppose either capable of being, upon this occasion, actuated by feelings of revenge for the conduct of the Family of Bourbon, during the North American Revolution, and, while he has too great a dread of the just displeasure of your Royal Highness to suffer him, for one moment, to entertain the thought of daring to suggest to your Royal Highness to act upon that perfidious example of that most perfidious Family; he cannot refrain from humbly expressing his hope, that your Royal Highness, who well recollects that memorable instance of envy, insolence and perfidy, will see, therein, no reason that England, by standing with her arms folded, should now make a manifest sacrifice of her present and permanent interests and of

her immortal glory, lest, in the frank and honourable pursuit of these, she should sterilize the Vine-yards of France and dry up the sources of the Treasury of Spain.

Therefore, your Petitioner, well assured that your Royal Highness can have no feeling, not in perfect harmony with the interest and honour of the nation, and also well assured of your Royal Highness's disposition to listen with indulgence to the representations and prayers of even the most obscure of His Majesty's faithful People, ventures, upon the grounds of that assurance, to pray, that your Royal Highness will be graciously pleased to espouse, in the manner which to your Royal wisdom shall seem meet, the cause of the Colonies and Countries which have been the subject of this his most humble Petition.

And your Petitioner,
As in humble duty bound,
Will ever pray.
WM. COBBETT.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The present Number concludes the 32d Volume, which comprizes all the Numbers that have been published during the present year; that is to say, *Thirteen* Numbers, from the beginning of January to the end of March, published previous to Mr.

Cobbett's departure; also his *Leave-taking Address*, published on the 5th of April, without numbering, but answering to No. 14; and *Twenty-four* Numbers, composed in America (*one* only excepted) commencing with No. 15, published on the 12th of July, and ending with No. 38, the present Number.

A Volume entitled, "The Last Nine Months of Cobbett's Political Register, written in England, before his Departure for America, on account of the Suspension of the Act of Habeas Corpus, 1817," was published in April, and included the whole of Volume 31, and the first Fourteen Numbers of Volume 32. The latter, or *American*, part of the present Volume, therefore, will be published in a *separate* Volume, as well as jointly with the preceding part. The entire Volume, in Boards, will be *Seven Shillings*; and the *American* part, (to which the *Leave-taking Address* will be prefixed) will be *Four Shillings and Sixpence*.

The 33d Volume will commence on Saturday, January 3d, 1818, when the Title of "*Pamphlet*" will be dropped, and that of "*Register*" resumed.

The first Number of Volume 33, will contain an *Exposure of the Intrigues of the Junto in Westminster for making that noble-spirited City a Rotten Borough*.



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